

Southgates Medical Centre Feedback

April 2022

In April 2022 we visited Southgates Medical Centre to speak with patients about their experience with local health and social care services. From this visit we received 18 reviews for the medical centre with an average star rating of 4.0 (out of five).

Overall, patients praised the staff for being friendly and the care they received from the surgery. Concerns which were raised included difficulties accessing the service including getting through on the phone and being able to see doctors for in person appointments.

The reviews are displayed in the table below and can be found on our website here: <https://healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/services/southgates-medical-and-surgical-centre-king-s-lynn-pe30-5qx>.

ID	Title	Review	Rating
159687	The language service is good	I like my doctors, they are good. They are always helpful, especially when you have kids. Sometimes you might need to wait if you are an adult but I understand as they are busy. The language service here is really good for people who don't speak English.	5
159690	Looking after me well	In my experience the surgery is very good. They are looking after me well. I rang up for an appointment last week and I like the system now. It works very well for me. I feel like the staff's attitude is brilliant and if they need to get in touch with me they phone me.	5

159695	Recently it has been difficult on the phone	Generally it is really good but lately it has been hard to get through the door to see the doctor. I do now have an appointment. It is also good having the pharmacy next door as I have lots of medication. The staff are friendly.	5
159700	Staff always smile under pressure	People complain about doctors but I think it's good. It is what it is. The staff are very good and they always smile under pressure. The surgery is easy to get to and not far away.	5
159701	Absolutely excellent, best in the country	You can always get appointments when you need it. If you go online they get in touch very quickly, often within the hour. Yesterday I sent a message, got a message back. They rang today and in less than 24 hours the problem is sorted. However the online form can be difficult for older people or if you are feeling unwell as the form is a bit complicated.	5
159710	If I've needed a Dr they have been available	I've always found the surgery very good. I'm in reasonable health and covid has changed things but if I've needed a Dr they have been available and that is all we need. My Dr is great! It is a bit frustrating that you cannot always see the Dr face to face though. My wife had a problem which was dealt with a prescription being sent without her actually being seen. But the online form I sent was dealt with on the same day.	5
159711	I think it's excellent	The surgery is excellent, I have never had any problems. It is well staffed.	5
159713	My doctor is very good.	It's okay. I have a very good doctor. They help with my medication and are good.	5

159693	Good, but I think they need more staff	This is a very good surgery but I think they need more staff. Today was okay, the nurse was very friendly and made me feel comfortable. There does not seem to be enough staff as I had to wait for checks to have my medication prescribed.	4
159702	Today was particularly good	It has been pretty good so far with today being particularly good. Everyone is very pleasant and it all went smoothly.	4
159708	My GP now is brilliant	In some ways this surgery is very good and some not so much but this is mostly due to the pandemic. It is difficult to contact the surgery, I have a pay as you go phone and it can cost a lot, up to £10 to call sometimes. I know I can go online but that is not good for everyone. I know these problems are not unique to this surgery but things seemed better before the pandemic. My GP now is brilliant I cannot fault her. In general terms the NHS is doing a tremendous job in difficult circumstances.	4
159709	Difficult to make appointments	In my experience it is difficult to make appointments, but getting repeat prescriptions is not too bad. I use the telephone to get in touch, I called last week and saw a Dr so perhaps things are improving. In the past - pre covid - things were fine and maybe things will get better again. I would say that you never know which Dr you will see, it's a different one every time.	4
159749	Recommended to move to this surgery	I am a new patient I was recommended to move to this surgery by a relative based on the location, experience and facilities available on site.	4

159696	Not had a prescription review for years	My prescription says I was due a review 3 years ago but I haven't had one or been approached to have one. I order my repeats online and they are usually waiting for me when I go to collect, but I can only reorder with a week to go which can be a bit frustrating - I am retired so I have the chance to then collect but not everyone is.	3
159699	It drives me mad trying to get an appointment	Trying to get through on the phone is difficult. Sometimes the queue is so long and once I had to wait for an hour to get through. Another time I came to the surgery because I couldn't get through on the phone and had a silly conversation with the receptionist about making an appointment online, but I can't do it online. Eventually I spoke to another lady and the problem was sorted. It drives me mad getting an appointment. Why can't it go back to normal. They say on the news people are not attending the doctors with problems soon enough, well it's because of the system, its so difficult. However, once you get in its very good, it's perfect.	3
159712	Not enough communication	The surgery is all right, their online contact could be quicker and reception could pay attention to patients in front of them more than the phones and each other.	3
159692	I don't like the online system	It has been tricky recently trying to get through on the phone. I don't like online and the reception staff are not always very helpful. It's such a long process. I now don't seek the help I need because I don't want to be a bother. I don't like to be a burden so I self medicate if I can. However when you get in I think the nurses are lovely.	2

159714	I want it to be how it used to be	In my opinion I want it to be how it used to be. Having to put on a mask to do two steps into the building to hand something in is silly - the whole system has changed and they want us to use online but I don't like it one bit. It's been going on for too long now and it is a shame. The staff attitude is too abrupt and rude. You should be able to walk in and talk to someone.	1
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Prior to our visit to Southgates Medical Centre we received an email from a patient who was not able to attend on the day. Their feedback they wished to share is displayed below.

1. This surgery is no longer doing routine testing. In the past Southgates's nurses have done a 24 blood pressure monitor. But no longer. This has been passed over to the QEH. The QEH is currently overrun and is quoting a cardiac appt of at least 9 months. And this is only for a consultation, not tests, which will be even longer for appts and then the results and then another consultation. Surely the nurses at Southgates can re-instate this routine testing. As they are no longer doing Covid vaccines, they should be able to get back to doing what they used to do prior to Covid.

2. Pre-Covid it was possible to book an appt with a GP on line, choosing the GP you wanted, with a day and time convenient for yourself. Now you have to complete an internet form (not easy for elderly people), wait for it to be triaged, then wait for an email/text reply, or a telephone call at a time of their choosing. So from the GP's point of view, a GP will need to review your file at the time of triaging, then later when sending an email/text message and then again if they speak to you on the telephone. If you think about it this whole procedure takes up 3-4 times the previous pre-Covid 10 minute appt, because of the time it takes a GP to review your medical file each time and for elderly people it may mean reviewing a number of chronic health conditions and related medication. So when can we go back to booking our own appts on line, giving a summary of the reason for the appt and then turning up for our 10 minutes slot?

3. Speaking to a real person on the telephone. Previous attempts have meant a very long wait in a queue or have been cut off.

4. When a GP does a referral patients believe that it automatically goes to the QEH or similar medical establishment. However, I have discovered that it goes to a Authorisation Body who decides if the referral should go ahead. Surely this is wrong. Surely, a referral from a GP is based and should only be based upon medical reasons. If funding is not available in this area for something, then the GP should explain this to the patient at the time.

Yet all of this is with a waiting room which is rather sparse. We need to get back to normal or close to normal soon. If not, it should be explained clearly to patients why not.